

Introduction

This Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) has been prepared in compliance with:

- ▶ The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508.
- ▶ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance, regulations on Environmental Impacts and Other Procedures (23 CFR 771) that establishes procedures for implementing NEPA provisions.

The intent of a DEA is to objectively present potential social, economic, and environmental impacts that could occur from the proposed project, and to identify measures that would mitigate those impacts. The goal of this document is to assist decision makers in reaching informed decisions about the project, and to disclose to the public the relative impact of the project. As part of this process, this document is prepared in order to solicit comments from interested citizens, organizations, and agencies regarding the proposed project.

Impacts are described for both natural (e.g., air quality, biological) and human (e.g., socioeconomic conditions, noise) environments. The DEA presents preliminary design information to help the reader better understand the proposed project, and to assist in comparing the differences in impacts among the alternatives studied in detail. The DEA also includes measures to avoid, reduce, or otherwise mitigate negative impacts when appropriate.

If after reading the DEA, readers wish to comment, they are encouraged to be as specific as possible and address the contents of the DEA and/or the merits of the alternatives presented. Comments received will be considered in preparation of the Final Environmental Assessment (FEA). If after reviewing the FEA, the FHWA determines that this project would not have a significant adverse impact on the environment, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would be issued. It is important to note that issuance of a FONSI does not constitute final project approval. The project would be subject to other reviews and approvals before any construction activity begins.

This DEA supplements the information for the selected alternatives identified in both the *Red Mountain Freeway, SR 87 to US 60 Final Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation (ADOT 1999a)* and the *Santan Freeway, Price Freeway to Baseline Road Final Environmental Assessment (ADOT 1999b)*. In this document, the selected alternative included in the 1999 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (ADOT 1999a) serves as the “No-Build” Alternative for baseline environmental analysis.